



Cooperative Emergency Response

In a State as large and populated as California, no one emergency response agency can do it all. That is why cooperative efforts via contracts and agreements between state, federal and local agencies are essential in response to emergencies like wildland and structure fires,

floods, earthquakes, hazardous material spills, and medical aids. The CAL FIRE Cooperative Fire Protection Program staff are responsible for coordinating those agreements and contracts for the Department. It is because of these cooperative efforts that you may see fire engines and firefighters from different agencies at the scene of an emergency, working under a unified command relationship.



State

Under what is known as the California Master Mutual Aid Agreement, CAL FIRE assists other fire departments within the State when Department resources are available, regardless of the type of disaster. In turn, CAL FIRE can access the local government fire departments through the same agreement for assistance in wildland fire suppression. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) can also request that CAL FIRE assist with non-fire emergencies when the Governor has declared a State of Emergency. That was the case during the Northridge earthquake of 1993 and the state-wide floods of 1997, when CAL FIRE provided flood-fighting crews and incident management and logistical support services. When wildland fires rage across the state and resources are stretched thin, agreements with the California Military Department provide for California National Guard resources. This includes activation of the giant C-130 aircraft known as Modular Airborne Fire Fighting System (MAFFS), helicopters, support personnel, communications equipment, and other specialized resources.

Federal

The largest of CAL FIRE's cooperative programs involves an agreement for the exchange of fire protection services with federal wildland fire agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Parks Service (NPS). The goal is to have the closest agency respond to a wildfire, regardless of jurisdiction. Through this cooperative relationship, California is able to access federal and state resources throughout the United States to help in times of disaster, when Department resources are depleted. In turn, CAL FIRE provides assistance through interstate compact agreements to Federal and other state wildfire agencies throughout the Nation.





Local Government

Since the 1940s, local government entities such as cities, counties and districts have contracted with CAL FIRE to provide many forms of emergency services for their communities. CAL FIRE provides full-service fire protection to many of the citizens of California through the administration of 145 cooperative fire protection agreements in 35 of the State's 58 counties, 28 cities, 30 fire districts and 23 other special districts and service areas. As a full-service fire department CAL FIRE responds to wildland fires, structure fires, floods, hazardous material spills, swift water rescues, civil disturbances, earthquakes, and medical emergencies of all kinds. Local governments are able to utilize this diversity and experience through their contracts and agreements with the Department.

Contracted Counties

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is responsible for fire protection within State Responsibility Areas (SRA). SRA is found in 56 of California's 58 counties and totals more than 31 million acres. In most cases SRA is protected directly by CAL FIRE, however, in Kern, Los Angeles, Marin, Orange, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties, SRA fire protection is provided by the counties under contract with CAL FIRE. Known as "Contract Counties", they protect 3.4 million acres of SRA. CAL FIRE provides funding to the six counties for fire protection services including wages of suppression crews, maintenance of fire fighting facilities, fire prevention assistants, pre-fire management positions, dispatch, special repairs, and administrative services. The Department's budget also provides for infrastructure improvements.

